

## FOREWORD

### 1. PURPOSE

To publish NAVMC 2917, "Key Volunteer Network - Commanding Officer's Guide."

### 2. INFORMATION

a. This Guide is a parallel product coincident to MCO 1754.2A, "Marine Corps Key Volunteer Network."

b. NAVMC 2917 is one of four guides that provide detailed guidelines for the Key Volunteer Network. NAVMC 2917 amplifies and reinforces, but does not amend, MCO 1754.2A; if a conflict arises, the MCO shall take precedence.

c. Initial distribution of this Guide will be made per the current edition of MCO P5600.31.

### 3. RESERVE APPLICABILITY


This Guide is applicable to the Marine Corps Reserve.

### 4. RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations for improving this Guide are invited and should be submitted in writing to the Commandant of the Marine Corps (MHF).

### 5. CERTIFICATION

Reviewed and approved this date.

  
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ENCLOSURE (1)

KEY VOLUNTEER NETWORK

COMMANDING OFFICER'S GUIDE

RECORD OF CHANGES

Log completed change action as indicated.

Change Number	Date of Change	Date Received	Date Entered	Signature of Person Entering Change

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# **PREFACE**

This guide is one of several resource documents developed by the Key Wives Working Group which met in July 1992 under the auspices of Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps, Human Resources Division. A list of the membership of the Working Group, which represented a cross section of the Marine Corps, is provided on the following page.

The major task of the Working Group was to design and outline the documents required to support the Key Volunteer Network throughout the Marine Corps. The task was accomplished with great enthusiasm and creativity.

The accomplishments of the Working Group will have a far reaching impact. Marines and Marine families everywhere, now and in the future, will benefit from the outstanding contributions made by these pioneers in the Key Volunteer Network.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

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# THE KEY VOLUNTEER NETWORK PROGRAM GUIDES

This is the *Commanding Officer's Guide*. It provides COs with a description of the purpose of the Key Volunteer Network and suggested guidance regarding establishment and support of the Network. Section I of this guide provides a brief overview of the history of the program. Section II provides the CO with a general overview of the Key Volunteer Network. Section III provides guidelines on developing an effective Key Volunteer Network. Section IV discusses special considerations. Additional materials developed in support of the Key Volunteer Network include:

## *Key Volunteer Coordinator's Guide*

## *Key Volunteer's Guide*

## *Key Volunteer Network Training Guide*

The *Key Volunteer Coordinator's Guide* is the primary document for Key Volunteer Coordinators. It differentiates the major roles and responsibilities of the Key Volunteer Coordinator and the Key Volunteers.

Descriptions of the roles and responsibilities of others within the Key Volunteer Network are found in the *Key Volunteer's Guide*. Detailed information regarding the day-to-day functioning of the program from the Key Volunteer perspective is also provided in the *Key Volunteer's Guide*. The Key Volunteer Coordinator should be familiar with this document.

Since the Key Volunteer Coordinator will also be responsible for seeing that the Key Volunteers within her/his unit are trained, the Coordinator should also be familiar with the *Key Volunteer Network Training Guide*. Normally, the training itself will be conducted by the FSC. When there is no local Family Service Center (FSC), the Coordinator may organize or conduct the training.

Throughout the Guides, the Key Volunteer Network is described as assisting Marines and their families with family readiness issues. Included in Marine units are other military personnel, such as Navy chaplains, corpsmen, foreign exchange personnel, etc. When attached to a Marine unit these servicemembers and their families are part of the Marine family and should be considered a vital part of the Network.

# SECTION I

## INTRODUCTION

In White Letter No. 16-92, the Commandant of the Marine Corps acknowledged that the importance of family issues has increased dramatically in the Marine Corps during the last twenty years. Research studies have shown that issues related to family matters have the strongest impact on decisions to stay or separate from the service. A number of studies conducted immediately after Operations Desert Shield/Desert Storm indicated that family related matters were of great importance to the deployed service-member, and the manner in which families were supported impacted significantly on morale, retention, and readiness.

There are numerous statistics and a long list of testimonials that confirm that a Marine's performance relates directly to the quality of support from his/her spouse, immediate family, and even extended family. The Key Volunteer Network, along with the Marine Corps' Family Readiness Support Program, puts the knowledge, skills, and interests of Marine spouses to work for the total Marine Corps family.

This manual has been written for the CO and includes not only a general overview but also a step-by-step implementation guide for the program. Though this guide, for the most part, addresses the Key Volunteer Network at the unit (battalion/squadron) level, there is a Network at each level, up to Division/wing, under the auspices of the Commanding General (CG). Included is information on:

- \* Benefits that can be realized from an effective program.
- \* Ways in which the Network can be supported by the command to enhance the effectiveness of the Key Volunteers.

In addition to this guide, there is a Key Volunteer Coordinator's Guide, a Key Volunteer's Guide, and a Training Guide.

The Family Readiness Support Program and the Key Volunteer Network were officially established by MCOs 1754.1 and 1754.2A.

MCO 1754.1 establishes Marine Corps family policy and a Family Readiness Support Program to implement that policy. The Family Readiness Support Program is coordinated by a Family Readiness Support Program Coordinator at the FSC at each major installation.

MCO 1754.2A establishes the Key Volunteer Network as the CO's volunteer family support and communications network, and provides guidance for funding, training, and administration of the Network's activities.



## **SECTION II**

### **GENERAL OVERVIEW OF THE KEY VOLUNTEER NETWORK**

#### **A. HISTORY OF THE NETWORK**

The Key Wives Network has evolved over the last 15 years within the Marine Corps. It began with the increasing percentage of married Marines and the realization that issues concerning family members impact on a Marine's ability to focus on the duties assigned. The Key Wives Network proved its value during Operations Desert Shield/Desert Storm when many units deployed with little advance warning. Family members left behind relied on each other for information, help, referrals, and support. In recognition of the valuable contribution made by the informal networks, General Carl E. Mundy Jr., Commandant of the Marine Corps, formalized the Key Volunteer Network within the Marine Corps.

Just as the Network has evolved over time, so has the role of the Key Volunteer. Overall, Key Volunteers are better trained today and are more professional in the execution of their duties than those of any previous time. They are also keenly aware of their role as a conduit for communication between the families and the unit. The unit Key Volunteer Network is a reflection of the CO and his/her priorities; its strength lies in its ability to assist the unit by serving the needs of its families.

#### **B. BENEFITS OF AN EFFECTIVE KEY VOLUNTEER NETWORK**

An effective Key Volunteer Network will:

1. Provide an open, effective communications link between the CO and families in the unit.
2. Promote family readiness.
3. Improve the quality of life for unit families.
4. Assist families in finding and using available base and community resources.
5. Provide a non-threatening emotional support network for families.
6. Assist incoming families in becoming familiar with services available to them.

## **C. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **1. The Co.**

The CO determines the direction of the program based on the needs of the unit families. The CO selects, appoints, and should maintain regular contact with the Key Volunteer Coordinator. The CO also appoints the Key Volunteers in consultation with the Key Volunteer Coordinator, XO, Family Readiness Officer (FRO), SgtMaj, Chaplain, or others as desired.

### **2. The FRO.**

The FRO is appointed by the CO and is an active duty member of the unit. The FRO provides oversight and coordination regarding all family readiness issues. This may include educating and assisting Marines in the unit regarding family readiness responsibilities and liaison with the Family Service Center. The primary function of the FRO is to serve as the military point of contact for routine matters between the unit and members of the Key Volunteer Network. As such, the FRO provides administrative assistance and logistical support to the unit's Key Volunteer Network. FROs at the Group/Regiment level and above may participate in the Family Readiness Support Program Council at their installation. Experience has shown that the most successful FROs are those who understand the types of problems and needs which families have. It is recommended that the FRO be married, with children and experienced in the military (Capt/GySgt).

### **3. The Key Volunteer Advisor (Optional).**

The Key Volunteer Advisor position is a valuable asset to the program, but an optional one. The CO may fill this position with his/her own spouse, the spouse of the senior SNCO, or the spouse of another senior person in the unit. The Advisor acts as a mentor for the Key Volunteer Coordinator and the Key Volunteers by providing advice and support.

### **4. The Key Volunteer Coordinator.**

The Key Volunteer Coordinator is the management link between the CO and the Key Volunteer Network. The Key Volunteer Coordinator manages the Network through organization of Key Volunteer activities and coordination of the Network. She/he is appointed by the Commanding Officer and may recommend other Key Volunteers for appointment by the CO. The Coordinator reports directly to the CO regularly on family matters and is the conduit for information to and from the Key Volunteers.

#### 5. The Key Volunteers.

The Key Volunteers provide a personal link between the unit families and the unit. They provide Marines and Marine families information and referrals regarding needed services. They communicate with families and promote unit and family readiness. The Key Volunteers may be recommended by the Key Volunteer Coordinator, the FRO, the XO, Chaplain, SgtMaj, or others for appointment by the CO. Key Volunteers report regularly to the Key Volunteer Coordinator on their activities and family concerns.

#### 6. The FSC.

The FSC provides support services to Marines and Marine families including base and community information and referral, counseling, etc. The FSC also provides training, administrative support and consultation to the Key Volunteer Network. The FSC is responsible to the Commanding General/Commanding Officer at each major Marine Corps installation.

#### 7. The Family Readiness Support Program Coordinator (FRSPC).

The FRSPC at the FSC works with Key Volunteer Coordinators to schedule training for Key Volunteers. The FRSPC also serves as liaison to the Key Volunteer Network for the provisions of FSC support.

#### 8. The Families.

Through command education and the Key Volunteer Network, families become more self-reliant by learning how to solve problems, supporting each other, becoming aware of resources available, becoming better prepared for deployments, and dealing effectively with emergencies.

### **D. FUNCTIONS OF THE KEY VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR**

The Key Volunteer Coordinator position is required in each unit at the battalion/squadron level and above and in reserve units as established by MARESFOR. If the unit is small, the Coordinator may be the only Key Volunteer. The Coordinator serves under the direction of the unit's CO, works closely with its FRO to identify problems that affect readiness, and creates a dependable communication network between the unit and its families. The Key Volunteer Coordinator must be the spouse of a member in the unit and, ideally, should have demonstrated leadership and organizational ability.

The Key Volunteer Coordinator is appointed in writing by the CO for a specific period of time to work within the guidelines established under MCO 1754.2A.

Duties usually include:

1. Keep the CO informed on a regular basis on the state of family readiness in the unit.
2. Serve as a liaison between the CO and Key Volunteers, and provide feedback to the CO about family concerns.
3. Work with the FRO regarding family readiness matters.
4. Coordinate with key command personnel as necessary; e.g., the FRO, XO, SgtMaj, Chaplain, Key Volunteer Network Advisor, etc.
5. Develop an effective communications network among unit families; e.g., organize a telephone tree through Key Volunteers and activate it upon the CO's direction or as otherwise needed.
6. Assist in recruiting eligible volunteers and make recommendations to the CO for appointment to Key Volunteer positions.
7. Coordinate the training of Key Volunteers with the FSC's Family Readiness Support Program Coordinator.
8. Communicate to Key Volunteers the responsibilities of their position, informing them about the support available from the unit and the expectations of the CO.
9. Oversee the development and distribution of a newsletter on a regular basis.
10. Participate, as appropriate, in the local installation's Family Readiness Support Program Council and work closely with the FSC on training and resource matters.
11. Work with the Key Volunteer Coordinators from other units temporarily attached to their own unit during deployment.
12. Perform other Network activities as determined by the CO.

The Key Volunteer Coordinator provides assistance to Key Volunteers who are not able to resolve family problems at their level and provides assistance when families need help. In performing the Key Volunteer Coordinator duties, she/he will work with the unit, the FSC, and agencies - both military and civilian - to ensure that the Network provides effective assistance to unit families.

The Key Volunteer Coordinator and Key Volunteers assist the FRO in finding ways to educate families about their own readiness responsibilities. Duties may include organizing opportunities

for families to meet others so that they can find support and learn new skills. Though the Coordinator and Volunteers may plan social events for the families in the unit, the primary function of the Network is providing information and referral. The Coordinator and Key Volunteers can and should encourage interested family members to take initiative in planning social events and support their efforts.

An important aspect of the Key Volunteer Coordinator's work will be to acquaint the unit CO with issues that affect family welfare, the unit's morale and the level of preparedness encountered in contacts with Marine families. The Key Volunteer Coordinator may also be asked to assist in organizing appropriate recognition of Key Volunteers for their contribution to the unit.

During deployments, the Key Volunteer Coordinator needs to work with other Key Volunteer Coordinators in attached units to ensure all family members receive deployment news and have a point of contact in the receiving unit.

#### **E. FUNCTIONS OF KEY VOLUNTEERS**

The Key Volunteer's primary responsibilities are listed in MCO 1754.2A. A Key Volunteer must be the spouse of a member of the unit and be appointed by the CO.

A Key Volunteer is the primary point of contact for a designated group of families when they are in need of assistance or information. The Key Volunteer is also the primary point of contact for the Key Volunteer Coordinator who needs to pass information. She/he is a communication link between families and the unit. Additionally, she/he acts as an information and referral resource for those in the unit. Often, the Key Volunteer is seen as a role model who may serve to demonstrate coping and stress management skills. The number of Key Volunteers required to form a manageable Network depends on the needs, deployment schedule, and size of unit, as well as the experience of the families in the unit. A lower ratio of Key Volunteers to families is recommended during deployment. Normally, a Key Volunteer would be needed for approximately every ten to fifteen families.

Although the Key Volunteer Network is more visible during the deployment cycle, there are important tasks that provide vital continuity and support for families from the time their Marines join a unit until they leave. Ways in which a Key Volunteer helps the unit are:

1. Welcome and assist incoming members and families of the unit and ensure they are aware of services available to the "Marine Family."
2. Participate in a telephone tree as directed by the Key Volunteer Coordinator to ensure a rapid dissemination of information to families.

3. Maintain a family readiness roster of names, addresses, and telephone numbers for their assigned families and provide changes to the FRO via the Key Volunteer Coordinator.
4. Provide information to families to refer them to appropriate resources as needed (FSC, Red Cross, Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society, etc.), and follow up on referrals to ensure the assistance required was obtained.
5. Provide information and feedback to unit COs, via the Key Volunteer Coordinator and FRO, regarding family readiness issues.
6. Offer moral support and assistance to families during times of difficulty and/or crisis.
7. Assist the Key Volunteer Coordinator with occasional Network activities where unit families can meet each other and form support systems; e.g., videotaping, reunion workshops, etc.
8. Assist with Key Volunteer Network newsletters by providing input, writing, distributing, etc.
9. Perform other Network activities as determined by the CO.

Key Volunteers are recommended by the Key Volunteer Coordinator, Key Volunteer Advisor, FRO, SgtMaj, Chaplain, FRSPC, another Key Volunteer, or they may refer themselves. The Key Volunteers are approved and appointed in writing by the CO. Key Volunteers may complete basic training before appointment, or sign an agreement for training to be completed within a certain period of time. They must sign a Statement of Understanding. (See appendix A.) In addition to the training required by MCO 1754.2A, unit training may be required or offered on other issues, as deemed necessary by the CO.

# **SECTION III**

## **DEVELOPING AN EFFECTIVE KEY VOLUNTEER NETWORK**

### **A. SELECTING AND APPOINTING A KEY VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR**

The selection of the Key Volunteer Coordinator is perhaps one of the most important decisions that a CO will make about the Key Volunteer Network. The selection process is an opportunity for the CO to choose that individual who will best represent the unit and serve the unit's families. The selection of the right person is so important that, if a suitable candidate is not readily found, the CO may wish to consider leaving the position vacant until a qualified person is located. The Key Volunteer Coordinator at the unit's next higher level of command can brief the CO on the current status of his/her Network.

#### **1. Where to Look.**

The Key Volunteer Coordinator must be the spouse of a member of the unit. The CO can ask for volunteers at a Family Day or at the first family activity after assuming command of the unit. The XO, senior SNCO, Chaplain, and FRO should also recommend those spouses to the CO who have been active in the unit, or who possess the personal qualities and experience required. Qualified candidates can be found in both the officer and enlisted communities. It is not required nor expected that the CO's spouse or the SgtMaj's spouse be the Key Volunteer Coordinator. Their experience and maturity are best used in the Advisor capacity. Senior SNCO spouses are often those who are not only qualified but best able to relate to the families who use the Network.

#### **2. What to Look For.**

Successful Key Volunteer Coordinators have maturity and are experienced in military life situations. They relate well to the variety of situations and experiences the majority of family members encounter. It is important that they have the time and energy to do the job. Key Volunteer Coordinators must have sufficient management skills to organize and to coordinate training of the unit's Key Volunteers. Further, Key Volunteer Coordinators must be willing to subjugate their own priorities and perceptions in order not to conflict with those of the CO. The Key Volunteer Coordinators ideally should be:

- \* Someone with whom the CO can work closely and trust.
- \* Someone who can maintain confidentiality.
- \* Outgoing, friendly, self-confident.

- \* Intelligent, caring, a good listener, a good communicator, patient and flexible.
- \* Someone who will earn the support and cooperation of the unit family members.
- \* Experienced with deployment.
- \* Someone with a basic understanding of the Marine Corps and a positive attitude towards the requirements it places on Marines and their families.

It is wise to avoid candidates who have had severe family problems, those who volunteer in order to advance their spouse's career, those who seek status and power, those who have not demonstrated overall support for the goals and objectives of the program, and those who do not support the mission of the Marine Corps.

### 3. The Selection Interview.

The selection interview is the CO's opportunity to find someone as Coordinator who is competent and with whom the CO can work closely. It is also the time for the CO to express priorities for the unit.

The Key Volunteer Coordinator will not only work with the CO, but also with the XO, the Chaplain, FRO, and the senior SNCO. Their input concerning prospective applicants can be invaluable.

Given the amount of personal support the Key Volunteer Coordinator will need, it is important that the candidate's family be in agreement with the appointment.

### 4. The Appointment.

The way in which the Key Volunteer Coordinator is introduced will reflect the value placed on the Network, and will influence the credibility of the Key Volunteer Coordinator and the entire Network. When a selection is made, the following steps should be initiated by the CO:

- \* The candidate is notified of the appointment.
- \* A letter of appointment and a statement of understanding are sent to the newly appointed Coordinator (See appendix A.) The enclosed copy is signed and returned for the unit's file.
- \* FSC is advised of the appointment usually through the unit FRO.



\* The new Key Volunteer Coordinator is introduced to the senior members of the unit. Presentation by the CO increases the Key Volunteer Coordinator's visibility and establishes her/him as being approachable. It emphasizes the CO's support of the Network.

\* An appointment is made for the Key Volunteer Coordinator to discuss with the CO in detail the CO's priorities and expectations concerning the Network. This meeting is the CO's opportunity to provide guidance on how the Key Volunteer Network should be implemented. (See appendix B.) A schedule, as determined by the CO, is established for future meetings.

\* The Key Volunteer Coordinator meets with the FRO, who will assist the Network with routine and administrative needs. However, the Key Volunteer Coordinator should be advised of an open-door communication policy with the CO for special needs.

Sometimes the appointment is made with a mutually agreed upon trial period, for instance, for three months. The Key Volunteer Coordinator may resign the appointment at any time or be dismissed without repercussion. It is advisable to limit the permanent appointment of the Key Volunteer Coordinator for a term of one year. The term may be renewed. Some units select Coordinators to share the responsibilities if a single candidate cannot be found.

## **B. REPLACING THE KEY VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR**

It is important that the CO be satisfied with the Key Volunteer Coordinator. The effectiveness of the Network is based upon close, trusting, and candid communications. It is important that the CO gives praise when due or counsels as necessary. It is a disservice to the unit, the Network, and the Key Volunteer Coordinator in question to continue the arrangement when there is unsatisfactory performance.

The CO's right of dismissal is absolute and should be used if and when necessary. All appointments and dismissals should be worded very clearly to avoid any misunderstanding and subsequent difficulties. Dismissal of a Coordinator should never reflect on his/her spouse's position in the unit.

There are two situations when the CO should consider replacing the Coordinator:

1. Unsatisfactory performance or working relationship with the CO.

There may be a situation that requires immediate dismissal of the Key Volunteer Coordinator, such as a serious breach of confidentiality. Other reasons for dismissal could include continual inaccessibility to Key Volunteers and to unit

families, inability to do the job, or an unwillingness to participate in ongoing training. Any event that seriously erodes the CO's confidence and trust in the Key Volunteer Coordinator is sufficient grounds for replacement and should be done as soon as the situation dictates.

## **2. Evidence of Key Volunteer Coordinator burnout.**

Burnout is an occupational hazard for Key Volunteers. It is detrimental not only to the Key Volunteer Coordinator and her/his own family, but also reduces the effectiveness of the Network and its ability to serve families. Should a CO become aware of a burnout problem, a temporary relief from duties or permanent termination may be appropriate considerations.

If, during the term of appointment, there is a change of command, the incoming CO may reappoint the current Key Volunteer Coordinator or select a new Coordinator. Unless there are reasons for dismissal, it is generally more convenient to retain the incumbent who should be informed of re-appointment in writing. If the new CO intends to replace the Coordinator, a short-term re-appointment of the current Coordinator is an option until a replacement of the new CO's own choosing is located. The incoming CO should also have an interview with the incumbent to provide guidance and receive a briefing on the current program before automatically reappointing.

## **C. ESTABLISHING GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT FOR THE KEY VOLUNTEER NETWORK**

Although the Key Volunteer Network has the potential to provide enormous benefits to the families of the unit, this potential cannot be realized without the active support of the CO. Regardless of how dedicated and hard working a Key Volunteer Coordinator may be, without command assistance it will be extremely difficult to maximize the effectiveness of the Key Volunteer Network.

Communicating clear expectations to the Key Volunteer Coordinator is critical at the initial meeting, and prevents later misunderstandings and conflict. The Key Volunteer Coordinator should be treated as a member of the CO's staff. The CO should speak to the Coordinator directly or through the FRO. It is not appropriate for a CO to reach the Coordinator or a Key Volunteer through the Marine spouse.

The following guidelines are provided to establish an effective Network: (see appendix C for basic steps)

### **1. Contacts.**

- \* Initial Meeting.**

Soon after the appointment, a meeting should be arranged to discuss expectations in detail. Others who will be working closely with the Network (XO, senior SNCOs, Chaplain, FRO) might be invited to attend part or all of this meeting. Suggested items to cover at this meeting are:

- \* CO's priorities.

There may be certain issues and programs that are of more importance to the CO than others. Being aware of these priorities will enable the Key Volunteer Coordinator to align the efforts of the Network with needs of the unit. The Key Volunteer Coordinator also needs to know what the unit Marines have been taught about their family readiness responsibilities.

- \* Keeping the CO informed.

The CO must clarify the boundaries of confidentiality in line with existing laws and regulations by categorizing issues to be reported directly to the CO and those issues that should be referred to the FRO, Chaplain, FSC, etc. The CO needs to be aware of local laws on reporting suspected child abuse and neglect to local authorities, and direct the Key Volunteer Coordinator and Network accordingly.

- \* Confidentiality and the Command.

Though care must be taken when discussing personal or embarrassing information about a case or request for information, the CO must always be told of information when a potentially embarrassing situation may arise for the command, when media coverage is expected, when a serious crime has been committed, or any time a Key Volunteer Coordinator believes the CO should know about a case. Nevertheless, confidentiality is critical to the integrity of the Key Volunteer Network. All contact between Key Volunteer Coordinators/Key Volunteers and a Marine or family member will be given special attention to make sure that only persons with a "need to know" learn of any sensitive information. A breach of confidentiality is cause for relief from the position.

- \* In the Key Volunteer Coordinator's Guide is a list of questions which the Coordinator is advised to ask the CO. For reference, this list is included in appendix B.
- \* Regular Meetings.

Regularly scheduled meetings - ideally on a monthly basis - with the Key Volunteer Coordinator are the CO'S responsibility. Regular contact provides opportunity for feedback on the status of the Network, and on the morale of the unit families. Delegating all contact to others within the chain of command will lead to the perception that the program has a low priority with the CO, and will lessen the Network's effectiveness. One empowering aspect of the Network's existence is the perception that the CO cares about the well-being of families attached to the unit and gives the Key Volunteers, as family representatives, access to him/her through the Key Volunteer Coordinator and the FRO.

\* Point of Contact (POC).

The FRO is the POC for routine matters. This allows the Key Volunteer Coordinator to conduct business without having to disturb the CO except for those matters of special concern or importance. During deployment, it is especially crucial that the Key Volunteer Coordinator know where to go for support. It is the Co's responsibility to make arrangements for this support before deployment. It is recommended that the point of contact, be it the unit FRO, a FRO from another unit or higher level command, or a rear detachment unit have experience with the unit's families.

It is also important to establish how the CO will communicate with the Key Volunteer Coordinator (calls, letter, etc.) for both routine and emergency matters during deployment.

## 2. Funding

\* As an official Marine Corps activity, the Key Volunteer Network is authorized to receive Operational and Maintenance funds at the CO's discretion. If unit funds are not available, the Network can request non-appropriated fund support from the installation CO. Key Volunteer requests for funding should be addressed within the appropriate chain of command, i.e., unit FRO to the next level FRO to operational command FRO who will request from the installation CO.

\* MCO 1754.2A describes reimbursement policy and financial support of the Key Volunteer Network in detail. Paragraph 10608.3 of MCO 1700.27 allows installation commanders to approve, within certain parameters, the expenditure of non-appropriated funds (subject to availability) for special events for members of a unit and their families. Some special events (i.e., videotaping, reunion workshops, etc.) planned by the Key Volunteer Network may be eligible for these non-appropriated funds.

### 3. Administrative and Logistical Support.

- \* Every Key Volunteer needs an updated roster of all Marines with spouses' names, home addresses and telephone numbers. Ensuring the roster is regularly updated is a CRUCIAL unit support function. In cases of emergency, the Key Volunteers must rely on the accuracy of the roster to contact families. Key Volunteer Coordinators must be informed about spouses of personnel who join the unit just before or during deployment. They are often the ones who most need the Key Volunteers' help. Seeing that the Key Volunteers are supplied with the names of incoming families will assist in easing the stress of relocation and give those families a point of contact.
- \* MCO 1754.2A gives specific guidance on the administrative and logistical support a unit should give to the Network. Some examples of administrative and logistical support include meeting and storage areas, an answering machine, access to a computer, telephone, administrative supplies, and an updated unit family roster.

### 4. Legal Issues.

As a member of an official organization of the Marine Corps, members of the Key Volunteer Network may not solicit gifts or contributions for their organization or personnel. They may accept unsolicited gifts from businesses and persons who independently approach the Marine Corps or Marine Corps Volunteers with offers of assistance. Gifts which might create an appearance of impropriety should not be accepted. Such gifts include those from defense contractors. If in doubt, check with the installation Legal Assistance Office.

### 5. Motivation and Recognition.

As with any subordinate, proper motivation can call forth superior performance and dedication in the Key Volunteer Coordinator. A highly motivated Key Volunteer Coordinator is better able to motivate all the Key Volunteers in the Network. Some suggestions for rewarding and motivating the Key Volunteer Coordinator, and the Key Volunteers in the Network, are:

- \* Express personal, sincere thanks.
- \* Introduce the Network and discuss its appropriate use during incoming briefs or at unit functions.
- \* Recognize the Key Volunteer Coordinator and Key Volunteers at unit functions.

- \* Post the Key Volunteer Coordinator's picture with those of your other staff members.
- \* Respect their opinions and suggestions.
- \* Support the program - especially by giving time.
- \* Provide regular and dependable communication to the Network especially during deployment or a unit critical incident.

It is recommended that each Key Volunteer, at the end of her/his term of appointment, receive a certificate of appreciation from the CO, perhaps at a ceremony with personnel from the unit, other Key Volunteers, and family members present. At some installations, the CO/CG has recognized the outgoing Key Volunteer Coordinators at ceremonies either at the base headquarters or at his/her home.

#### 6. Training for the Key Volunteer Coordinator and the Key Volunteers.

Training is a key ingredient in the success of the Key Volunteer Network. Per MCO 1754.1, the Family Readiness Support Program has been established under the auspices of the installation FSC. It is the Family Readiness Support Program Coordinator's responsibility in coordination with the unit Key Volunteer Coordinator to organize and direct the training of the Key Volunteers. The FRO may assist in the process if needed. The participation of the CO, XO, and senior SNCO spouses in the basic level training is welcomed and encouraged. It should be made clear to all Key Volunteer Coordinators during the interview process that they are expected to attend basic training if they have not already done so, and are encouraged to attend continuing education courses available in their local area. Even for experienced Key Volunteer Coordinators, training and participation in classes is encouraged so that they are updated on local procedures and resources. Their willingness to attend such training should be addressed during the selection process. The Key Volunteer Coordinator is responsible for ensuring that each of the Key Volunteers in the Network has received Key Volunteer basic training. When an FSC is not available, the Coordinator may need to work with the FRO and other Coordinators in the area to sponsor basic training.

# **SECTION IV**

## **SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS**

### **A. INTRODUCTION**

Although Marine units differ in mission, size and location, the Key Volunteer Network has the uniform mission of promoting family readiness. The training and experience of the Key Volunteer Coordinator and the Key Volunteer are transferable to any situation and any type of unit. However, the uniqueness of some units may impact on the operation of the Key Volunteer Network.

### **B. RECRUITING COMMANDS**

The entire family is affected by the recruiting duty assignment. The additional stress within the family, coupled with the lack of installation/support systems, places an extra burden on families. In this case, administrative support for the Key Volunteer Coordinator may include providing a telephone answering machine, newsletter support, a command telephone credit card, invitational travel orders and other allowable expense reimbursements per MCO 1754.2A.

### **C. OCONUS**

The Key Volunteer Network serves as the communications link between the assigned families and the unit. Remote sites present additional challenges to Key Volunteers. It is particularly important for these Key Volunteers to be given the opportunity to attend relevant educational training. The senior Marine present at a remote site appoints the Key Volunteer Coordinator and serves as the point of contact.

### **D. RESERVE COMMANDS**

The experience of Operations Desert Shield/Desert Storm as well as Operation Restore Hope illustrated the need for maintaining a continuing reserve Key Volunteer Network. In the midst of emotional and physical upheaval during a mobilization, the responsibility of organizing a vital Key Volunteer Network is extraordinarily difficult. Therefore, to ensure services are available prior to mobilization, a Key Volunteer Network must be established as a normal part of each reserve unit.

COs can support the Key Volunteer Network and Family Readiness Support Program by using the existing directives as well as incorporating family readiness into drill weekends and the training schedule. For example, spouses can be invited to this training, perhaps in conjunction with a Family Day. During this time, issues such as mobilization, finances, benefits, individual responsibilities, Leave and Earnings Statement's

(LES's), etc., can be discussed. It is important that reserve families understand that finances can abruptly and drastically change, but they are eligible for certain benefits.

Suggestions for a Reserve Key Volunteer Network include:

1. Maintain a Key Volunteer Network continuously in peacetime as well as during mobilization.
2. Designate a FRO from each reserve unit.
3. Select and appoint a Key Volunteer Coordinator and Key Volunteers.
4. Work closely with the reserve unit's Key Volunteer Coordinator.
5. Provide Key Volunteer Coordinators and Key Volunteers with the most current rosters available of names, addresses and home telephone numbers.
6. Provide the Key Volunteer Coordinator a work area, telephone answering machine, telephone credit card, computer, administrative supplies.
7. Provide financial and administrative support to the Network for newsletters, telephone calls and invitational travel orders to ensure frequent communication with reserve Marines and their families.
8. Use the annual training periods to practice activating the telephone tree.
9. Provide for Network continuity by requesting a written turnover report from each outgoing Key Volunteer Coordinator.

It is extremely important that the reserve Key Volunteer Coordinators and Key Volunteers receive the same professional training as their counterparts in the active duty forces. While this may be difficult, considering the geographical dispersion of reserve units, it is essential.

Reserve Key Volunteer Coordinators and Key Volunteers who reside near a major base or station may use the Key Volunteer training program already in place for active duty volunteers. All Key Volunteer Coordinators should receive a copy of the Key Volunteer Network Training Guide. Former Key Volunteer Coordinators and Key Volunteers may serve as mentors for those who are actively involved. Sometimes at small and isolated installations, and at many Reserve Home Training Centers, the Key Volunteer Coordinator may find it necessary to seek related training in her/his community, e.g., Red Cross, Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society, and community colleges (for courses on time management, stress management, communication skills, etc.)



Each reserve unit should be certain that each family has:

1. An updated roster of the Family Readiness Officer, Key Volunteer Coordinator and Key Volunteers.
2. Toll-free telephone numbers of the Regional FSCs located at MCB Camp Pendleton, CA, and MCCDC Quantico, VA.
3. A file containing important family documents and information: wills, birth certificates, marriage certificate, power of attorney, insurance documents, etc.
4. A copy of "What's Next? - A Guide To Family Readiness".

#### **E. JOINT TOURS**

It is important that Marine families serving on joint tours maintain a communication link among themselves and with the rest of the Marine Corps. The Key Volunteer Network can function as that link. The senior Marine present appoints the Key Volunteer Coordinator and serves as the point of contact.

#### **F. ROTC/MOI**

At ROTC/MOI units the senior Marine present appoints the Key Volunteer Coordinator. This is an excellent opportunity for the members of the Key Volunteer Network to set an example for the future officers of the Marine Corps concerning the importance of family readiness.

#### **G. INSTALLATIONS**

As every Marine is potentially deployable, a Key Volunteer Network should be in place at all times to handle sudden emergencies, rapid deployments and lengthy TAD assignments. Family readiness is a continuous process. The installation Key Volunteer Coordinator needs to be provided up to date rosters with family members' telephone numbers, and to receive the administrative and logistical support to print and distribute a newsletter to keep installation families informed of resources available to them.

# APPENDIX A

## LETTER OF APPOINTMENT

Dear (Name of Key Volunteer),

Congratulations on your selection as a member of (name of command) 's Key Volunteer Network. As a Key Volunteer, you will play a vital role in helping maintain the readiness of (name of command)'s "Marine Family."

While a Key Volunteer, your responsibilities will be many and varied, and you can expect to be asked to help in many areas affecting the readiness and morale of (name of command) 's families. These many areas include:

- Welcoming Marines and their families to the command.
- Passing information to our families via the family telephone tree.
- Maintaining "readiness rosters" on families in your area which may include home telephone numbers, addresses, etc.
- Referring families to available services and resources at (name of installation) and the surrounding community.
- Assisting with deployment and "Welcome Home" activities.
- Assisting with preparing (name of command) 's newsletter.

All of these activities are important and help to ensure (name of command) 's families remain informed and ready to deal with any contingency. My command coordinator for Key Volunteer activities is (name of Key Volunteer Coordinator). As my direct representative, she/he (as appropriate) will assist you in the performance of your Key Volunteer activities and help ensure you receive the training you need to perform them successfully. Please do not hesitate to call on her/him (as appropriate). She/he (as appropriate) has my complete trust and confidence and will help you to better help others in this command.

As a Key Volunteer, I ask that you read the attached "Statement of Understanding" and, if there are no questions, please sign it and return it to (name of Key Volunteer Coordinator) as soon as possible.

Again, it is my pleasure to welcome you to (name of command) 's Key Volunteer Network. I look forward to having you as a member of our team!



## STATEMENT OF UNDERSTANDING

(Date)

I understand that my service as a Key Volunteer for (name of command) will commence effective (enter effective date). I understand that my service as a Key Volunteer will be performed on a gratuitous basis, i.e., without compensation. Any reimbursement for incidental expenses will be subject to the availability of funds and the CO's discretion.

I understand that, as a Key Volunteer, I will not be considered to be a Federal employee for any purpose other than the Tort Claims provisions of Chapter 171 of Title 28, U.S. Code, and for the purpose of relating to the compensation for work related injuries provided under Chapter 81 of Title 5, U.S. Code. I also understand that service as a Key Volunteer does not entitle me to further employment with a Federal organization or agency

I understand that, as a Key Volunteer, the personal information provided me on the members of (name of command) and their families is, and will be, protected by the provisions of the Privacy Act of 1974. I understand that the personal information I have been provided will be used ONLY in the official execution of those tasks relating to Key Volunteer matters.

I understand that, as a Key Volunteer, I will hold myself to the highest standards of confidentiality. I understand that issues pertaining to the members and families of (name of command) will be discussed ONLY with those individuals as defined in MCO 1754.2A or as designated by the CO, (name of command) as having the "need to know."

\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_  
(signature of Key Volunteer/date)

# **APPENDIX B**

## **UNDERSTANDING THE COMMANDING OFFICER'S PERSPECTIVE**

For the Key Volunteer Coordinator to tailor the Network to the needs of the unit, it is important for the Key Volunteer Coordinator to obtain an answer from the CO to as many of the following questions as possible:

1. What are the CO's goals for the Network? What are the priorities?
2. What is the history of the Key Volunteer Network in this unit?
3. How many volunteers does the Network currently have? Is that number adequate for the program goals in this unit?
4. How will additional Key Volunteers be recruited, screened and selected?
5. How will the Key Volunteer Coordinator and Key Volunteer Network be introduced to the unit?
6. How is the Network supported administratively?
7. How would that change if the unit deploys?
8. If the unit deploys will the FRO or a detachment be left behind? If not, with whom should the Key Volunteer Coordinator work to support the unit's families, e.g., the FRO of the next higher echelon in the chain of command or the FRO of a sister unit?
9. What situations does the CO want reported directly to him/her?
10. How will the Key Volunteer Coordinator communicate with the CO and how often?
11. Will the Key Volunteer Coordinator meet directly with the CO occasionally and work through the FRO or other unit staff on routine matters?
12. What communication systems will be available, such as access to phone lines, newsletters, E-mail, answering machines?
13. How and when will information be updated during a deployment? (recorded messages from CO? etc.)

14. How will Key Volunteers have access to these communications systems?
15. How often will rosters be updated and made available? How will Key Volunteers be advised that incoming families have arrived?
16. Will families and designated beneficiaries of single Marines be included in the Network?
17. Who represents the unit as liaison to the Family Readiness Support Program Council?
18. How will the Network be supported financially?
19. What expenses will the unit reimburse and what is the system for reimbursement?
20. What plans are in place should the unit experience a critical incident?
21. How will internal conflicts with Key Volunteers be handled?
22. What constitutes grounds for dismissal of a Key Volunteer Coordinator or a Key Volunteer?
23. What is the procedure for removing an inappropriate Key Volunteer?
24. Should removal of a Key Volunteer be necessary during a deployment, what is the procedure?
25. How are Key Volunteers to be recognized and rewarded for their service?
26. How are Marines in the unit instructed on their personal readiness responsibilities?
27. Would the CO be comfortable with a three or six month trial period for all appointments?

Written goals and guidelines, based on the CO's expectations, the unit's volunteer assets, and its history should be developed to be used for future reference.

# **APPENDIX C**

## **BASIC STEPS FOR ESTABLISHING A NETWORK**

1. Appoint FRO.
2. Appoint Key Volunteer Advisor (optional).
3. Select and appoint a Key Volunteer Coordinator.
4. Meet with Key Volunteer Coordinator and determine direction of program.

Address:

- size of Key Volunteer Network and recruiting strategies
  - scope of program: welcoming and outreach efforts, networking events (information fairs, videotaping sessions,) and communication with unit families (telephone tree, newsletter, personal visiting, etc.)
  - coordination with FRO and other staff for routine matters
  - training requirements (FSC support)
  - regular meetings with Coordinator
  - financial and administrative support available
5. Appoint the Key Volunteers.
  6. Introduce Network to unit.
  7. Maintain program on permanent basis.